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ABSTRACT

This publication summarizes the proceedings of a Project FORUM conference that examined the needs of homeless children and youth with disabilities. The summarized presentations address the definition of homelessness, the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act, services for homeless students under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, educational services for children who are homeless in five states (Maryland, Illinois, Iowa, Pennsylvania, and Virginia), facts about homelessness that shape the nature and delivery of educational services, and challenges related to children with disabilities who are homeless. Proposed strategies are presented for meeting the following challenges: (1) increasing awareness about the educational needs and rights of children who are homeless and enrolling them in school; (2) sustaining multi-pronged advocacy through public education and training and legislative and administrative advocacy; (3) providing timely, appropriate, multi-disciplinary assessment for students who are homeless; (4) finding solutions to broad problems through collaboration between schools and the community; (5) increasing the valid and reliable data on issues related to homelessness; and (6) addressing mobility issues as they relate to identifying students with disabilities who are homeless. (Contains 16 references.) (CR)

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Policy Forum

Educating Children with Disabilities Who Are Homeless

Convened
December 5-7, 1999

Proceedings Document

prepared by:

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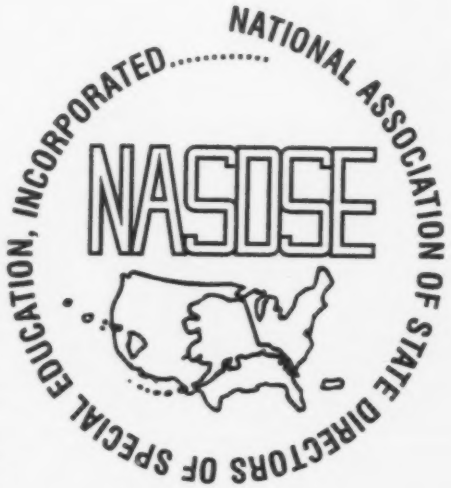
Project FORUM at NASDSE



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IDEAs that Work

U.S. Office of Special Education Programs

Policy Forum

Educating Children with Disabilities Who are Homeless

Convened
December 5-7, 1999

Deliverable – Task 3-3.1a
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Background and Goals of the Policy Forum

In 1975, Congress greatly expanded upon previous legislation addressing the education of children and youth with disabilities and passed P.L.94-142. Known as the Education for all Handicapped Children Act of 1975, this law granted children and youth with disabilities, for the first time, a right to a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE). Several subsequent reauthorizations made significant changes to the EHA and the 1990 amendments changed the name to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Although children and youth who are homeless were always covered by this disability legislation, they were not explicitly mentioned until the final regulations for the 1997 amendments to the IDEA (P.L.105-17) were issued in March 1999.

The Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act (McKinney Act) was passed by Congress in 1987 as part of the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Within this legislation, the educational rights and needs of children and youth who are homeless were specified. In 1990, amendments to the McKinney Act expanded the legislation to further improve the educational experiences of those who are homeless; however, there is no specific mention of children with disabilities who are homeless.

Although the IDEA and the McKinney Act are both administered by the U.S. Department of Education, different offices have responsibility for their implementation—the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services' (OSERS) Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) and the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE), respectively. Before the legislative milestones described briefly above, neither children with disabilities nor children who were homeless were federally guaranteed access to our public education system. Now legal rights are in place for both populations, but many children are still not receiving the services they need to become productive members of our society.

To examine the needs related to homeless children and youth with disabilities, Project FORUM at the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) planned and convened a policy forum as part of its Cooperative Agreement with OSEP. This policy forum was conceived as a method of sharing the collective wisdom of those who work with two populations of children who are often considered separately.

The goals of the policy forum were:

- to identify key issues and challenges related to children with disabilities who are homeless;
- to discuss current educational strategies; and
- to propose federal, state, and local actions for improving the education of these children.

Preparation for the Policy Forum

Project FORUM worked closely with OSEP, the National Center for Homeless Education, and the National Coalition for the Homeless to select participants whose knowledge and experience in the area of homeless education would contribute to the policy forum goals. In addition, effort was made to select persons involved at the national, state, and local levels. Invited participants included national organization representatives, state and local coordinators for homeless

education, state directors of special education, university-based researchers, and parent/family advocates. The participant list can be found in Appendix A. The agenda for the policy forum was also developed in collaboration with the groups noted above.

Process of the Policy Forum

The policy forum was held at the Crystal City Marriott in Arlington, Virginia on December 5-7, 1999. The opening session was a dinner on Sunday evening, December 5, that began with a welcome from Project FORUM's director, Joy Markowitz, and the Project's Officer from OSEP, Kelly Henderson. After participants introduced themselves, Barbara Duffield, from the National Coalition for the Homeless, gave a brief presentation on the definition of homelessness. This was followed by a presentation on the McKinney Act by Yvonne Rafferty from Pace University.

Continuing on Monday morning, Marie Mayor, from OSEP, presented on the IDEA and children who are homeless. Participants then engaged in a facilitated discussion regarding the provision of special education services at the state, district and school level to children who are homeless. This included the viewing of a short segment of videotape. At lunchtime, guest speaker, Regina Sokas, Education Director for ACTS Shelters in Towson, Maryland, discussed her experiences on the "front lines."

For most of the afternoon on Monday, participants worked in small groups to identify and describe challenges to effective service provision and interagency coordination. Later, each small group reported out to the full group and the challenges were consolidated into one list. Before adjournment on Monday, participants prioritized the challenges.

On Tuesday, December 7, participants worked in small groups to identify strategies to address the high priority challenges and these were presented in a large group session. At the conclusion of the policy forum, FORUM and OSEP staff discussed the potential impact of this meeting. Participants were also informed that they would be given the opportunity to review the proceedings document before it is finalized and disseminated.

The policy forum agenda can be found in Appendix B.

Policy Forum Proceedings

Defining "Homelessness"

presentation by Barbara Duffield, National Coalition for the Homeless

Increasingly, the word "homeless" has come to take on meanings other than a lack of housing. Two recent news events illustrate this. In New York City, a man was charged with injuring a woman by throwing a brick. There has been much controversy as to whether or not the accused man is homeless. Mayor Guiliani described the accused man as homeless because he had been panhandling at the bus depot and reportedly did not have an address; however, there was no evidence that the man had been at any of the New York City shelters or was living on the street. This is an example of equating homelessness with violence, and demonstrates that the term homeless has taken on a meaning unrelated to literal housing status. In New York, defining homelessness, and the issue in general, has become a potential campaign issue and promises to remain a controversial topic.

The second event took place in a northeastern state. A mother and two children lost their apartment and went to a low cost motel because there was no room at the one local shelter. The mother is working full-time and transporting her children to the school they attended before they lost their apartment. However, the principal of that school told her that the children were no longer residents and their records would be transferred to the school near the motel. The mother sought legal assistance and eventually the state coordinator of homeless education called the principal to describe the children's rights until the McKinney Act. Reportedly, the principal does not believe the children have the right to remain in that school because he does not believe that they are homeless. He contends that the family cannot be homeless because the mother is working and the motel is adequate housing. A hearing is scheduled to determine if the children are truly homeless and therefore guaranteed the rights of homeless children. The children will be allowed to stay in the school until the hearing is held. In this instance, homelessness is equated with unemployment.

These two incidents demonstrate widespread ignorance about homelessness and the people who experience it. There are numerous stories behind the people who are described as homeless. Some have left their homes due to domestic violence, some have recently had their houses burned down, some are struggling with substance abuse, some lack adequate income to pay for housing, and some live in city shelters. All these people may have little in common other than a lack of permanent housing and a stable place to call home. Perhaps there is a need to back away from the label and understand the individuals, especially when talking about educating children who are homeless.

At this point in her presentation, Ms. Duffield summarized the handout entitled "Identifying Homeless Children and Youth," which is included in Appendix C. She noted that this document is a "work in progress," and suggestions are welcome.

Perhaps the biggest obstacle to providing educational services to homeless children is the lack of awareness about the problem.

Now more than ever, homelessness is a **housing** problem. There are other factors in the equation, such as substance abuse, domestic violence and poverty, but the lack of affordable housing is a key factor. There is a gap of about 4.4 million housing units, and rents are rising at twice the rate of inflation. There are more and more working people who are on waiting lists for affordable housing or simply cannot find housing at all. For every 100 families living at 30 percent of the area's median income, only 36 affordable housing units are available to them.

Poverty is a related factor. Children are poorer than any other age group in the US; they make up 39 percent of the people in poverty, but only 26 percent of the total population. There has been a decrease in the poverty rate for children in recent years and a larger decrease this year, but the rate is still above the rate in the 1970s and the poverty rate for children under six remains stable and high. Clearly the economic boom is not reaching our youngest citizens.

A number of organizations and advocacy groups have released figures on the dramatic impact of poverty and housing instability on the health and emotional well being of children. For example, children who are homeless are four times more likely to have asthma and delayed development, and twice as likely to be hungry. Children who are homeless are much more

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likely to be absence from school, perform poorly on tests, exhibit behavior problems, and repeat a grade.

The Stewart B. McKinney Act is the primary vehicle for addressing the problems of children who are homeless. This Act helps to ensure access to school and school success. For advocates and others who are concerned about these issues, there is a lot of hope right now because the reauthorization of the McKinney Act is under way. The proposed changes will improve opportunities for all children who are homeless, as well as those with disabilities, and increase awareness of homeless issues.

Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act

presentation by Yvonne Rafferty, Pace University

In 1987, Congress recognized the disruption that homelessness causes in people's lives with the passage of the McKinney Act. This Act authorized a wide range of programs and benefits to provide urgently needed aid to the nation's homeless. Title VII-B provides protection for the educational needs of children and youth who are homeless. The 1990 amendments to the Act significantly expanded the federal directives to ensure that school districts respond to the educational needs of students who are homeless. In 1994, the Act was further strengthened as part of the reauthorization of the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA). Eight components of the Act are described below.

1. The McKinney Act defines *homeless* and *children*. It is important to get the word out about who is homeless and protected by the Act because there is much confusion about this term. *Homeless people* are not only those who live in shelters or on the streets, the definition also includes people living in hotels, or transitional housing. In regard to the term *children*, many people are surprised that it includes children birth to the age of 21. This corresponds to the IDEA that also covers children and youth with disabilities in this age range.

2. The Act mandates the adoption of policies and practices to ensure that homeless children are not stigmatized. As stated, "...homelessness alone should not be sufficient reason to separate students from the mainstream school environment..." (Sec. 721[3]). State education agencies (SEAs) and local education agencies (LEAs) "will adopt policies and practices to ensure that homeless children are not isolated or stigmatized" (Sec. 722 [g][1][H]).

3. The Act mandates equal access to public schools and a choice of school placement, meaning that homeless children have the same access to education as their permanently housed peers. Children may remain in their current school or transfer into the school serving the attendance area in which they are currently staying. LEAs "...shall comply, to the extent feasible with the request made by the parent or guardian regarding school selection..." (Sec. 722[g][3][B]). This is a very important part of the law and prevents children being bounced from one school to another. When children lose their home, they should not have to lose their school at the same time. Some principals are under the mistaken impression that a child who is homeless can be transferred out of the school of origin even if the parent wants the child to stay.

4. The Act mandates equal access to all educational services and programs. Students who are homeless need proper educational placement, appropriate support services, and promotion of their social and emotional well being. According to SEAs nationwide, the most frequently reported educational needs of children who are homeless include (a) remediation/tutoring, (b) support services such as counselors, and after-school/extended day/summer programs to provide the basic needs for food, shelter, and recreation. In addition, children who are homeless may require special education services, bilingual services, and services for gifted students. Children who are homeless, including preschoolers, are guaranteed the same access to special education services as their housed peers. All children who are homeless are automatically eligible for services under Title 1 Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) whether they live in a Title 1 school attendance area or not. Children who are homeless may receive Title 1 educational or support services in schools and shelters or other facilities outside of school.

5. The Act mandates the removal of barriers to the enrollment, attendance, and success in school. Before passage of the McKinney Act, residency requirements were the most significant barrier because homeless students are, by definition, without a residence. When parents attempted to enroll their children in the school district where they were temporarily staying, admission was frequently denied because they were not residents of the district. Even when they were allowed to register, many experienced substantial delays because of missing records (e.g., birth certificates, academic records, and immunization records). If children wanted to stay at their current school, this was often made impossible because of transportation barriers. There were also school access barriers as a result of discriminatory shelter polices against males (particularly those over the age of 12) who lived with relatives or friends and not their parent or legal guardian. The 1990 amendments substantially strengthened this aspect of the Act by expressing intolerance for any and all barriers.

6. The Act mandated the provision of direct services to promote enrollment, attendance, and success in school. The 1990 amendments to the McKinney Act moved beyond access barriers and recognized the need for services once children are enrolled in school, in addition to significantly increasing appropriations from the 1987 levels. SEAs are explicitly mandated to provide grants to LEAs for these purposes. Schools may use funds for such services as before- and after-school programs, tutoring, preschool programs, parent education, counseling, social work services, transportation, and a variety of other services that may not otherwise be provided. LEAs that receive such funds are required to coordinate with other agencies and designate a liaison for homeless education.

7. The Act imposes comprehensive requirements for states that participate in the program and mandated coordination by SEAs, including the assignment of a Coordinator of Education of Homeless Children and Youth at the SEA. State coordinators are required to (a) estimate the number of children and youth who are homeless in the state; (b) document problems they experience gaining access to schools/preschools, progress made in addressing access barriers, and success facilitating school enrollment, and attendance; and (c) report their finding to the US Department of Education (USED).

8. The Act mandates oversight by the USED, including reviewing applications and state plans, monitoring compliance by the states, and reporting to the Congress at the end of

each fiscal year. The USED is also authorized to make grants available to SEAs for implementing the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program.

Congress took a major step in 1987 to address the educational needs of children and youth who are homeless, and this was reinforced in 1990 and 1994. At the very least, we must ensure that the requirements of the McKinney Act are enforced. Students covered under this Act are also covered under the IDEA, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and the Head Start Act. Shelter providers and others who come in contact with children who are homeless must be made aware of the rights of these children and how to help their parents. Parents must be involved in the decision as to whether their children should continue to attend their original school or transfer to other schools, and transportation problems must be addressed. SEAs and LEAs must collaborate with health and housing agencies to ensure that children and youth who are homeless have access to needed services.

The Stewart B. McKinney Act can be downloaded from the National Center for Homeless Education's web site at http://www.serve.org/nche. Refer to the side-by-side presentation of the McKinney Act and proposed changes in Appendix D.

Discussion

- The McKinney Act does specifically fund technical assistance centers. The National Center for Homeless Education at SERVE is funded as a clearinghouse (see web site in paragraph above). Some Comprehensive Centers funded under the Improving America's Schools Act provide technical assistance in the area of homelessness, but only on a limited scale. Technical assistance and staff development are greatly needed.

- The term "school of origin" is generally used to refer to the school the child attended before becoming homeless. For the sake of stability, this is often the best school, but not always. For example, if there has been violence in the home, the child may need to be transferred to a school where the abusing parent cannot find the child. In some cases, this may be another state. Efforts must be made to protect the child and school decisions must be made on an individual basis.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
presentation by Marie Mayor, OSEP

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) has always covered children who are homeless, but their needs were not always addressed. The IDEA was amended in 1997, and the final regulations that were issued on March 12, 1999, specifically mentioned children who are homeless for the first time:

> *The State must have in effect polices and procedures to ensure that--All children with disabilities residing in the State, including children with disabilities attending private schools, regardless of their disability, and who are in need of special education and related services, are identified, located, and evaluated; and ...The requirements of [this] paragraph of this section apply to--Highly mobile children with disabilities (such as migrant and homeless children);...*
> *[34 C.F.R.§300.125(1999)].*

Although there is only one mention of children who are homeless in IDEA's regulations (and an additional mention in the comments that accompany the regulations), issued March 12, 1999, it is a powerful phrase because it puts to rest any notion that the law does not apply. This phrase also addresses the concern that agencies have about children who are homeless not being identified as disabled as required by the IDEA. However, advocacy is still absolutely necessary for this population.

OSEP has a strong commitment to students who are homeless and has made it a priority to inform groups and agencies that work with this population about the key elements of the 1997 amendments to IDEA. These key elements include:

IDEA emphasizes that "special education" is a service or set of services, not a place (e.g., classroom in a school building, wing in school building or separate school). These are services a student needs to benefit from special education in the least restrictive environment—an environment that would be most like a regular education classroom. Although local administrators may believe that in certain cases it is easier to group children who are homeless (or children with certain disabilities) into one setting, the law states that these children are entitled to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment.

All eligible children ages 3 through 21 with disabilities are entitled to an Individualized Education Program (IEP). Homeless shelter staff and other advocates for the children who are homeless are often surprised that parents have the right to participate in their child's IEP meeting, including parents who are homeless or coping with drug addiction. Parents may also have other persons, such as an advocate or expert, as members of their child's IEP team. Some shelter directors have helped parents advocate for their children. Infants and toddlers who are eligible for IDEA receive services identified in the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).

The 1997 amendments to IDEA emphasize the role of the regular education teacher. For a child who is, or may be, participating in the regular education environment, at least one of that child's teachers must be a member of the IEP team. That teacher must, as appropriate, be present at the IEP meeting and identify the modifications needed for the student with a disability (including one who is homeless) to succeed in the regular education teacher's classroom.

The IDEA entitles eligible school-age children with disabilities to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. For infants and toddlers birth through 2 years of age who are eligible under IDEA, services specified in the IFSP are available. This is a critical element of the law because a large percentage of children who are homeless are under the age of three years, a population covered by Part C of the IDEA.

Increasingly, states are requiring that high school age students pass a test, or a series of tests, to graduate (e.g., New York). Also, at the elementary and secondary levels states are introducing tests that function as accountability measures and document progress of individual students and the specific schools. The 1997 amendments to IDEA require that students with disabilities participate in state and district-wide assessment programs (with appropriate accommodations, if needed). The state or local educational agency must develop alternate assessments for those children with disabilities who cannot participate in state and district-wide assessment programs. Participation in these testing programs poses big problems for students

who are homeless who often have poor attendance. This problem is increasing collaboration between general and special education at the SEA level. Generally, in states where there are penalties for schools if a student does not participate, efforts are made to include students who are homeless. But, in other places, children who are homeless are left in the shelters on testing days.

Another new set of requirements in the 1997 amendments addresses students with disabilities who have behavior problems. In developing a child's IEP, the IEP team, in the case of a child whose behavior impedes his or her learning or that of others, must consider, when appropriate, strategies and support to address that behavior, including positive behavioral interventions. Other provisions of the law address functional behavioral assessments and behavioral intervention plans. Generally, students who are suspected of having a disability and have been referred for special education evaluation are protected under IDEA. This is particularly important for students who are homeless because their high mobility often lengthens the evaluation process.

IDEA specifies that services for young children with disabilities be provided in "natural environments," unless there is a justifiable reason to serve a child in another setting. Children who are homeless should have the same access to evaluations and services as their permanently housed peers, and screening for disabilities should be occurring in places accessible to families who are homeless. The Child Find requirements of IDEA apply to homeless children.

Homeless shelter directors say educators can help in the following ways:

- Provide shelter directors and others who work with children who are homeless outside of school with information about the rights of students with disabilities, and the IEP and Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) process.
- Network among all those who work with children who are homeless (federal, state, and local levels).
- Assist parents who are homeless in learning about IDEA and their rights.
- Foster cooperation between those who work with the homeless and those who work in the schools.
- Facilitate the participation of parents who are homeless in the IEP and IFSP processes, including providing accommodations if necessary.

Discussion

- Generally, if a parent or teacher (or other school personnel) has documentation that a student who is homeless may have a disability and that student is in transition from School A to School B, that student is still entitled to protections under IDEA. This is particularly important in regard to suspension and expulsion because the longer a student who is homeless is out of school, the more negative the consequences for that student.

- Many parents are not aware of the protections under IDEA. More workshops should be provided in shelters at times when parents are available (e.g., evenings). The churches that work with shelters could also assist with this. Homeless issues are being addressed at some of the Parent Training and Information Centers, but more is needed. The Improving

America's Schools Act (IASA) Regional Conferences and the National Parent Center Conference could provide more coverage on problems for children with disabilities who are homeless. More suggestions about how to reach parents are needed.

Provision of Services to Students who are Homeless

The following section contains a summary of information about educational services for children who are homeless in five states that were represented at the Policy Forum.

Maryland

The Maryland State Department of Education coordinates the state McKinney Programs. The state McKinney Coordinator convenes interactive meetings for homeless education representatives from all Maryland school systems several times each year.

The program being conducted in the Baltimore County Public schools was presented as an example of the programs which may be conducted in other school systems. Baltimore County has developed a systemic approach to homeless education, involving all parts of the school system in identification of homeless children and youth and provision of services to students and their families. The key to program effectiveness is comprehensiveness, communication and collaboration. The Baltimore County Homeless Education Program, coordinated out of the Title I and Child Care Office, has several distinct tiers:

Within School System—

1. Homeless Education Steering Committee – This committee, comprised of representatives from all relevant divisions of the school system, provides an informed network to identify and support homeless students. The committee, comprised of teachers, secretaries and school administrators, and staff from special education, staff development and transportation, determines gaps and provides integrated information, programs and services. Student Service Learning is an important component of this committee, as students may earn their service credits for high school graduation by working on homeless issues.
2. School Based Homeless Education Liaisons – as described below, these individuals serve as critical communication links with each school in the county. These liaisons were identified through part of the statewide staff development plan for educating all members of the school community about homelessness and the needs of homeless students.

Between School System and Others—

3. Inter-Agency Council on Homeless – the school system's homeless education coordinator is a member of this countywide council, which provides communication and joint action among various agencies and the County Executive. The agencies range from the Department of Social Services and the Health Department to the Housing and Police Departments.
4. Baltimore County Coalition for the Homeless – the school system's homeless education coordinator serves on the Board of this coalition, allowing for ongoing

interaction with shelters and other service providers as well as community and religious organizations addressing homeless issues.

The meeting continued with the viewing of a ten-minute section of a videotape entitled, "Supporting Homeless Students." The video was used as part of staff development, and may be obtained from the Baltimore County Public Schools by contacting Jill Moss Greenberg using the contact information listed in Appendix A. The videotape showed two school secretaries talking about how their schools enroll children who are homeless. These two women were part of the staff development planning process and the videotape is used for staff development in the Baltimore County Public Schools. This videotape demonstrates an effort to involve all employees in the system and emphasizes the importance of working together to meet the multiple needs of students who are homeless. School secretaries are also given a one-page information sheet on homeless education and family rights, which secretaries are asked to keep at their fingertips.

A school secretary is often the first person in the school who greets a family who is homeless. This encounter is critical to the family's sense of acceptance. School is very important to children who are homeless, not only for their education but their social needs as well. School secretaries (and others) must understand that mothers who are homeless want the same education for their children as any other mother.

In the Baltimore County Public Schools, training has been done with a team from every school on issues related to children who are homeless. Shelter directors and the county Coalition for the Homeless helped conduct the training, as did some parents. Each school designated a school-based liaison for the homeless to insure that the rights of students in their school are being protected and stay in touch with county resources. Building administrators often do not have the time to assume such responsibility.

Maryland has created an exception to the early childhood regulations that allows young children who are homeless to be enrolled in early childhood programs, including special education programs, even if the program is at capacity. This is important because children who are homeless require immediate placement.

An example of the interagency effort being directed to the issue of homelessness in Maryland is an awareness-raising project that has taken the shape of a blank address book. This address book contains photos of people who are homeless and is being distributed to policy and decision makers around the state. This is the joint effort of the Baltimore County Public Schools, Department of Social Services, the Baltimore County Coalition for the Homeless, the University of Maryland Photo Outreach Project, and one elementary school that raised money for printing of the address book.

Illinois

Illinois funds 19 McKinney programs throughout the state, each with full time liaisons and a statewide grant to help build awareness of the rights of homeless children in all school districts. By the end of 1999, a contact person for the education of homeless children had been identified in most of the 896 school districts. Materials from Opening Doors, the statewide project, are sent to these contact persons and to the 19 liaisons with suggestions on how the materials

might be used. This is a new system that should help in the enrollment and educational success of all homeless children in Illinois.

Many homeless children in Illinois still have difficulties in obtaining their rights, even with a strong state law and an awareness-building campaign. Illinois followed the passage of the federal law, Improving America's School Act of 1994 (IASA), with its own state law, the Education for Homeless Children Act, signed into law on January 24, 1995. While the IASA helped to improve services to homeless children in all of the U.S., the Illinois law went several steps further and clarified that:

- Parents have the right to choose either their child's school of origin or the school nearest to where they are living.
- Transportation will be provided if the parents choose to have their child return to the school of origin.
- The child is to be enrolled **immediately** if the parents choose the school nearest to where they are living, even if they do not have any records.
- The child is to be enrolled **immediately** and allowed to stay in school even if there are disputes to be resolved.

Iowa

Iowa's governor created an office for homelessness in the Department of Human Services and that office has an interagency task force that meets every two months. The Department of Education also created a statewide coordinating committee for issues on the homeless. Chapter 33 of the Iowa administrative code (very similar to the McKinney Act) provides the framework for this infrastructure. One of the strengths in Iowa is the Area Education Agency (AEA) system (intermediate districts) that helps implement services for students with disabilities and those who are homeless. Program review guides, developed by the state, facilitate the collection of information from schools and communities about the services being provided for the students who are homeless. Unfortunately, there is not a lot of money available under the McKinney Act in Iowa—only $20,000 for each of the seven school districts that have a McKinney grant. There are liaisons only in districts with grants. As a result, there are major needs at the local level (e.g., support for transportation of the children to their original school). Particularly in rural areas, students who are homeless are not being identified for services. Another big problem in Iowa is the teenage runaways and "throwaways," throwaways defined as youth who parents will not permit them to live at home and for whom the parents have not made other satisfactory living arrangements. Runaways and throwaways cannot be kept in shelters without parental permission and these youth do not want to get that permission.

Pennsylvania

In Pennsylvania, three situations exist in the 501 school districts in regard to children who are homeless: (1) fully-dedicated McKinney sites with 100 percent funded liaisons, (2) school districts where there is a designated homeless contact person who has received some training related to homelessness, and (3) districts where there is a designated homeless contact person who has received very little or no training in the area of homelessness. In the 13 McKinney sites that have a fully-funded liaison, the system works very well for students who are homeless. There is never a perfect system, but a full time liaison is a basic need. Unfortunately, turnover

of staff makes the work more difficult and every year training is necessary. There are great concerns about the districts where the designated homeless contact person has had no training. Even though the system has been in operation for 12 years, the main challenge in Pennsylvania is still getting children who are homeless enrolled in school. Once they are in the door, they are usually treated equally, at least until individual needs arise.

Virginia

In Virginia, collaboration is the most positive result of the McKinney Act. A strong state-level collaborative network is being formed and added state funds are supporting this effort. Outreach is also happening with the legislature and other state offices, and a small part of state law has been changed in favor of students who are homeless. Interagency relationships at the state level have also been enhanced, and research is being conducted by five faculty and numerous graduate students at a state university. Although the formation of coalitions and advocacy groups takes a lot of time and effort, the payoff is great. At the local level, there remains much work to be done. Students who are homeless are still being denied access even though there is a homeless advocate identified in each school. Guaranteeing the rights of children who are homeless must become part of the every day working life of school staff. While providing training to parents who are homeless is very important, the biggest challenge in Virginia is ensuring that school office staff and educators at all levels (teachers, administrators, superintendents) are aware of the rights of children who are homeless and work to guarantee those rights.

For more information about programs in Maryland, Illinois, Pennsylvania, and Virginia, contact Jill Moss Greenberg, Gary Dickirson, Tom Norlen, and James Stronge, respectively, using information in Appendix A. For information about Iowa's programs contact Ray Morley using information in Appendix E.

Discussion

- Although there are many barriers to overcome in schools and communities, state leadership is necessary to bring systemic change to the local level.

- It is important to keep in mind that only about one third of children who are homeless are in shelters. The others are living in "doubled or tripled-up situations," campgrounds, or cars.

- Children who are homeless need a "champion"—one dedicated person, especially one in a position of authority, who can make a program work by requiring participation in awareness and training programs. There is always a true champion in school districts that have successful programs. The challenge is to turn a court-appointed champion into a true champion.

- The Elementary and Secondary Education Act is in the process of reauthorization and the protections for students with disabilities who have discipline problems (in the IDEA) are being considered so that education continues even for disciplined students without disabilities. One other proposal for this law is a requirement that every system have a contact person to help students who are homeless.

- Homeless children currently have legal protections to guard against their being "marginalized" in society; however, if they were to be considered a legal "minority," their protections would be heightened. Unfortunately, it is not only the poor homeless families that are powerless, but those who work for them (advocates, liaisons) often feel powerless as well.

- The federal funds appropriated for IDEA are important and give the law power, without which it would have less of an impact. The McKinney Act has only $28 million, which means it has a small impact and less power.

- It is important to publish information about homelessness in publications that are read by those other than homeless advocates. This increases awareness and builds interagency relationships. Often, the only people who come to conferences about the homeless are those who work in this area or are already familiar with the issues. Too often in education (federal and state level), there are separate "silos" or departments where each sub-population (e.g., English language learners, poor, disabled, general learners) is addressed separately.

- There are only two states with laws regarding education for the homeless—Iowa and Illinois—and even in these states, the lack of awareness about homelessness poses problems.

- Many people who are homeless wish to remain anonymous and this poses an even greater challenge in terms of guaranteeing rights and providing services. For example, migrant homeless often fear immigration problems

Luncheon Speaker - *Regina Sokas, Education Director, ACTS Shelters, Towson, MD*

Facts about homelessness that shape the nature and delivery of educational services:

Educational Factors

The head of household in homeless families frequently lacks the education needed for financial independence. Mothers who are homeless often had a very negative experience with school themselves, were dropouts, and/or have low reading levels. As a result, they may not be effective educational advocates for their children or may be considered "non-compliant" by school staff. Sometimes shelter workers have to demand parent compliance with school procedures and use sanctions of removal from a program to force involvement.

Children who are homeless are three times more likely to be placed in remedial education and four times more likely to drop out of school. Academic setbacks are due to exhaustion, poor attendance, frequent changes of school, no place or time for homework, and stigmatization among peers. Shelter workers may have consequences for parents who do not get their children to school regularly and on time; however, this requires adequate staffing to attend to these issues. Also, the reality is that shelters or other temporary living situations are not likely to have quiet places for students to do their homework.

In regard to young children who are homeless, several studies have been done using the Denver Developmental Screening Test. Fifty-two percent of young homeless children in a rural area presented developmental delay. The same picture was found in New York City, where three-quarters demonstrated developmental delay. In the District of Columbia, 61 percent of young children who were homeless had at least one area of developmental delay, and 60 percent required further medical and psychiatric evaluation.

School is often the only constant in the life of a child who is homeless. Schools have power that other agencies do not have because a mother can go to jail if she doesn't send her child to school. As a result, a lot gets "dumped on" the school to meet a growing list of needs for homeless children. Qualifying a child who is homeless for special education services is often the only effective way to get many of a child's needs addressed.

Family and Mental Health Factors

Alcoholism and abuse are all too common problems in families that are homeless, and these problems interfere with the education of the children in the family. Parents may not send their children to school because they "look bad" or they are injured themselves and cannot attend to the business of readying their children for school. Parents may move from place to place to avoid an alcoholic or abusive family member, resulting in sporadic school attendance for the children. Findings also show that a high percentage of children who are homeless suffer from depression; however, they are an under-served group in terms of mental health services

Attitudinal Factors

There are suburbs where strong attitudes against homeless children exist, "city kids coming in to steal education." Even in schools, some staff members question efforts being made to provide appropriate services when the student may move to another school soon.

Medical/Health Factors

Children who are homeless are more likely to be delayed in immunizations, have elevated blood lead levels, and have higher rates of accidents and abuse. They also exhibit stunted growth. In addition, children who exhibit behaviors typical of attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder may not be identified and properly diagnosed.

The lack of medical/health records has historically been a major barrier to enrolling children who are homeless in school. This is less of a problem now and families are more often given at least 30 days to bring necessary immunization records to a school before new shots are required. However, it is still common for children to get the same immunization several times due to lack of documentation.

Discussion

- Middle-ear infections are common and often left undiagnosed in young children who are homeless. This is probably a factor in many speech and language disorders.

- The IEP is very valuable because it follows the child from school to school and services must be provided. The IEP is often the only way to prevent a child from "falling through the cracks." One strategy being used is a "educational passport," a packet of important school records, including an IEP, that parents can carry with them when their children transfer to a new school. Some programs for families who are homeless provide briefcase-like folders for this purpose. (For more information about educational passports, contact the National Center for Homeless Education at 1-800-755-3277 or <homeless@serve.org>.)

- Each shelter operates differently, but they can share strategies. Tapping alternative sources of funding is a necessity and a challenge for all shelters. For example, funds for preventing domestic violence and dropouts have been used successfully in some jurisdictions. Each state has sources of funding that can be accessed for children who are homeless.

- Language and cultural differences can create barriers for families who are homeless. For example, until recently, no Hispanic people came to shelters for the homeless in DC. It was believed that the Hispanic community was taking care of their own people. However, targeted outreach resulted in a large increase in the number of Hispanic families in the shelter program.

- Some cultural groups would be less likely to think about using a shelter because of cultural norms regarding taking care of those who are needy. For example, a traditional Asian or Hispanic person may be more shy about expressing his/her needs. It is vital for shelter staff to be knowledgeable about and sensitive to cultural differences.

- In all cultural groups, there is a tendency for people who become homeless to stay with relatives or friends until they wear out their welcome; then they come to a shelter. Staying with relatives or friends may be more common in rural areas because of the lack of shelters or transitional housing. Doubling or tripling up may be kept secret because it is forbidden in the lease of the person who rents the unit. In such situations, many children have to be kept quiet and they lack normal stimulation because of the needs of the others living in the same place.

Challenges

Participants generated a list of challenges related to children with disabilities who are homeless and later prioritized the challenges. The challenges are listed below in prioritized order.

- Increasing awareness about the educational needs and rights of children who are homeless (awareness on the part of educators, school staff, administrators, shelter staff, and parents)

- Sustaining multi-pronged advocacy for children who are homeless through public education and training, and legislative and administrative advocacy

- Addressing mobility issues as they relate to enrolling students who are homeless in school, identifying students with disabilities, and providing continuity of services

- Providing timely, appropriate and multi-disciplinary assessment for students who are homeless

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- Finding solutions to broad problems (e.g., affordable housing) and specific problems (e.g., childcare, transportation) through collaboration between schools, other human service agencies, and the community

- Increasing the amount of valid and reliable data on the following topics:
  - ~ mobility
  - ~ effective strategies
  - ~ assessment
  - ~ causal factors
  - ~ relationship between homelessness, disabilities, poverty, culture, race, language, violence, gender, sexual orientation

- Transferring and maintaining the educational and health records of children who are homeless in a timely manner to facilitate intra and inter school/agency communication

- Reaching the birth to five population of children who are homeless

- Giving parents who are homeless the tools they need to be effective advocates for their children (e.g., information, rights under IDEA, links to parent organizations)

- Finding sufficient funding for appropriate services for students with disabilities who are homeless beyond IDEA funds (e.g., Title 1, Early Childhood, English Language Learners)

- Identifying appropriate approaches for use with students who are homeless in regard to national origin, language, disability, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status

- Insuring equal access to all services for students who are homeless

- Addressing the needs of students who are homeless in rural areas, including those on reservations

- Providing adequate, appropriate, and on-going staff development related to homelessness

- Addressing the lack of information for educators on homelessness and disabilities

- Increasing interagency collaboration with respect to responsibility for children with who are homeless

- Changing the attitudes of educators and other professionals about homeless people.

- Reaching and serving the teenage/runaway/drop-out population

- Addressing the complexities of involving students who are homeless in statewide testing, "high stakes" testing, and other accountability activities

- Increasing the expectations of educators in regard to progress of students who are homeless

- Reconciling competing or dueling legislation that addresses children who are homeless (e.g., IDEA and McKinney Act)

- Providing transportation for students with disabilities who are homeless, including preschoolers
  ~ within the school district
  ~ to school of origin
  ~ for parent involvement
  ~ to daycare and afterschool activities

Proposed Strategies to Address the Challenges

Participants proposed strategies to address the highest priority challenges listed in the previous section. Although each strategy is listed under one challenge topic, many could be placed in more than one topic area. The strategies are not listed in order of importance or sequence.

These strategies should be considered and implemented knowing that "homeless children" do not all reside in shelters and are heterogeneous in many other ways. Confidentiality and privacy are important to families who are homeless because of stigmatization and safety. Also, due to developmental differences attention must be paid to age of the child as strategies are implemented. Finally, consistent and continuous implementation of any strategy is critical to its success.

To increase awareness about the educational needs and rights of children who are homeless and enroll them in school:

- Create a simple poster with pertinent facts about Childfind, the McKinney Act and Title I, and post in public places (e.g., schools, and shopping centers).

- Use public service announcements (PSAs) to disseminate pertinent facts about Childfind, the McKinney Act and Title I.

- Have a Memorandum of Agreement between OSERS, Title I and Homeless Education signed by the respective directors to reinforce their support of the McKinney Act.

- Post any notice of public input sessions (concerning monitoring) in homeless shelters.

- Contact the Migrant Education offices regarding people who could testify at public input sessions.

- Send a letter to the Chief State School Officers from the U.S. Department of Education (US-DOE) regarding the needs of children who are homeless and ask them to bring this to the attention of the superintendents in their state.

- Add another option to 1-800-USA LEARN (toll-free number of USED) to explain the rights of children who are homeless.

- Provide USA-LEARN callers with the toll-free number to the National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities and the National Center for Homeless Education in English, Spanish and Haitian Creole.

- Use the federally funded Parent Training and Information Centers (PTIs) and other parent groups to provide training to both staff and parents in homeless shelters.

- Make keynote and other total group presentations at state and national conferences that are sponsored by disability groups and other organizations and associations about issues related to education for children who are homeless. (Examples of such meetings are National Association of State Directors of Special Education [NASDSE], National Early Childhood Technical Assistance System [NECTAS], National Association of School Psychologists [NASP], Council for Administrators of Special Education [CASE], National Association of Protection and Advocacy Systems [NAPAS], school secretaries association, school transportation association, etc.)

- Disseminate written materials at state and national conferences on issues related to education for children who are homeless.

- Generate more awareness material on students with disabilities who are homeless that is sensitive to cultural, linguistic, and regional issues (e.g., race, gender, sexual orientation, and citizen/residency status).

- Reach out in a sensitive manner to homeless parents who had negative school experiences when they were young.

- Provide staff development for all school employees (e.g., principals, teachers, support staff) on issues related to educating students who are homeless, including the importance of having high expectations.

- Change enrollment procedures to expedite enrollment of homeless students.

- Make the federal parent and professional training materials on the 1997 amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) available to homeless advocates and McKinney Act liaisons.

- Utilize federal monies, such as Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) and State Improvement Grants (SIGs), to increase awareness of the needs of students with disabilities who are homeless.

- Require that all districts have coordinators for homeless education, not only those with McKinney grants (3% nationwide).

<u>To sustain multi-pronged advocacy (including parents) through public education and training, and legislative and administrative advocacy:</u>

- Provide education and training at homeless shelters by a multidisciplinary team (e.g., parents, advocates, teachers, child and family agency professionals and lawyers) about special education.

- Provide follow-up outreach in the form of technical assistance and consultation for parents at homeless shelters and other sites that serve homeless children and youth eligible for special educational services.

- Support legislative and administrative advocacy for the improvement of educational services for children who are homeless.

- Promote interagency collaboration and responsibility to improve educational outcomes for children who are homeless.

- Target parents of homeless children, shelter providers, religious leaders, child and family agency stakeholders, and the health community for advocacy training.

- Fund advocacy and professional organizations to nurture and sustain grass roots advocacy in legislative and administrative forums in the area of homeless education.

- Promote advocacy by providing information on web sites and public service announcements (PSAs) in multiple languages.

- Access resources from the private and public sector, including state and federal discretionary funds, to coordinate advocacy and services for children who are homeless provided by state directors for homeless education, protection and advocacy systems, National Coalition of Title I Families, National Center on Homeless Education, and others.

- Put homeless issues on the agenda of the Federal Interagency Coordinating Council (FICC), the National Association of Protection and Advocacy Systems (NAPAS), the IDEA Partnership Projects, and others.

<u>To provide timely, appropriate and multi-disciplinary assessment for students who are homeless:</u>

- Provide new students and their families with information about all resources and support services available in the school.

- Conduct screenings and evaluations by an appropriate school-based or early intervention team, and have shelter staff facilitate this process (e.g., transportation).

- Complete the educational evaluation immediately if the student being evaluated becomes homeless during the evaluation process.

- Be sensitive to the fact that many students who are homeless do not need a full-scale evaluation and parents may be reluctant to "label" their child. (It can be damaging to the student to bring an inappropriate amount of attention to the student upon entry to a new school.)

- Track the living status of the student to establish the appropriate timeline for assessment. (For example, if the student is in a 30-day shelter, immediate attention should be paid to getting the evaluation process expedited.)

- Design and implement a state policy on the timely transfer of school records.

- Support the timely transfer of school records across state lines.

- Examine the idea of using a national tracking system for children who are homeless (e.g., migrant program), with sensitivity to issues of confidentiality and family safety.

- Develop technology for electronic school record transfer that is both efficient and confidential.

- Require that families be provided with copies of evaluation reports (immediately, not only upon transfer from school) and encourage families to keep this information and provide it to their children's new school.

- Help parents in homeless shelters update and store their children's school records in a manner that protects confidentiality.

To find solutions to broad problems (e.g., adequate affordable housing) and specific problems (e.g., childcare, transportation) through collaboration between schools and the community:

- Establish a state-level interagency task force that includes families who are, and were formerly, homeless.

- Include on interagency task forces members who are knowledgeable about homelessness and special education issues.

- Identify communities that have effective interagency collaborations supporting families who are homeless, reward them with recognition, and provide funding for dissemination of effective strategies.

- Post on state-level web sites available resources in the area of homelessness.

- Conduct program reviews in all school districts on the implementation of state and federal (McKinney Act) laws, not just in districts with McKinney grant funds.

- Develop and disseminate a planning review guide—with places to modify for individual state legislation—for use by state coordinators for the homeless.

- Address issues of homelessness in state plans and state improvement grants.

- Create a funded initiative to promote collaboration between school and community providers (e.g., "seed money" and model demonstration projects).

- Coordinate efforts and activities of all categorical programs (e.g., special education, early childhood, Title I, English language learners).

To increase the valid and reliable data on issues related to homelessness:

- Use the McKinney Act's definition of "homeless" (i.e., those in shelters, living with relatives, doubled-up situations, etc.).
- Develop procedures, guidance, and technical assistance as to how to include students who are homeless in accountability systems.
- Disaggregate state wide assessment data by homelessness and disability status.
- Require the newly-mandated district liaisons under the McKinney Act to collect data on students with disabilities who are homeless, including but not limited to: number of children, type of living situation (e.g., shelter, relatives), mobility, referral and placement process, services provided, setting, and progress.
- Require that annually reported data on students served under IDEA include the number of students served who are homeless by age.
- Use varied data sources and methods, especially community resources, to collect data on homeless students with disabilities. (Telephone inquiries and surveys are not effective methods.)
- Coordinate migrant and language minority programs for better collection and maintenance of data on homeless students with disabilities.
- Use qualitative approaches (e.g., case studies, focus groups) to research the problems with identification of disabilities, the referral process, and service provision.
- Provide funding to support data collection on homeless children that is efficient, comprehensive, and consistent.

To address mobility issues as they relate to identifying students with disabilities who are homeless and providing continuity of services:

- Make shelter placements with consideration of children's educational needs and community ties. Every effort should be made to keep students in the school that is in their best interests.
- Identify model programs and practices that minimize disruption to education caused by homelessness and family mobility for infants, toddlers and school age children.
- Provide waivers for students who are homeless to allow them to enroll in programs or participate in activities that may be filled before they enter the school (e.g., preschool programs, enrichment activities, after school programs, and extracurricular activities).

- Conduct timely screening and evaluation of children to insure the services needed are received.

- Contact immediately the student's previous school to acquire pertinent school records especially individualized education programs (IEPs) and individualized family service plans (IFSPs).
- Earmark funds to transport children who are homeless to school of origin to provide for continuity of educational services.

- Collaborate with other agencies that provide services to homeless families to ensure continuation of services following a change in living location.

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[1] For assistance locating these references, please contact Project FORUM at NASDSE at 703-519-3800, 703-519-7008 (TTY) or joy@nasdse.org.

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Appendix A

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Appendix A
Participant List

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Appendix B

Agenda

Appendix B
Agenda

Sunday Evening - December 5, 1999

5:00 - 5:15	Welcome from Project FORUM ..... *Joy Markowitz* Goals of the policy forum
	Welcome from OSEP ..... *Kelly Henderson*
5:15 - 5:45	Participant introductions
5:45 - 6:30	Dinner
6:30 - 6:50	Review of agenda & logistics ..... *Joy Markowitz & Matt Boyle*
6:50 - 7:10	Defining "homelessness" ..... *Barbara Duffield*
7:10 - 7:30	Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act ..... *Yvonne Rafferty*
7:30 - 8:00	Video followed by questions and discussion

Monday - December 6, 1999

8:30 - 9:00	Breakfast
9:00 - 9:05	Logistics for the day ..... *Joy Markowitz*
9:05 - 9:30	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) ..... *Marie Mayor*
9:30 – 12:00	Provision of special education services to children who are homeless at the state, district and school level..... *facilitated group discussion*
(10:45 – Break)	
12:15 - 1:30	Lunchtime discussion with ..... *Regina Sokas* *Education Director for ACTS Shelters, Towson, MD*
1:30 – 3:30	Identification and description of challenges to effective services and interagency coordination ..... *small work groups and large group reporting*
3: 30-3:45	Break
3:45-4:00	Identification of priority challenges ..... *individual activity*

Tuesday - December 7, 1999

8:30 - 9:00	Breakfast
9:00 - 9:10	Logistics and agenda for the day ..... *Joy Markowitz*
9:10 - 11:10	Addressing priority challenges: Federal, state, local and schools roles..... *small workgroups*
11:10 - 11:30	Next Steps..... *Joy Markowitz & Kelly Henderson*
11:30	Adjourn

Appendix C

Identifying Homeless Children and Youth

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Identifying Homeless Children and Youth

Homeless children and youth are frequently invisible. Children and parents hide their condition for many reasons. Children are humiliated and depressed by their homelessness, and fear ridicule from classmates. The stigma of homelessness and the fear of having children taken away often prevent parents from informing school officials of their living circumstances. In addition, homeless children and families strive to "fit in" so that they can have be treated like everyone else and experience normalcy in otherwise chaotic times. Children and youth who are not enrolled in school, and whose families are not living in shelters, are even more invisible to schools and their communities.

All of these factors can make identifying homeless children and youth a formidable task. Yet homeless children and youth must be identified if they are to be assisted with school enrollment, attendance, and academic success. Fortunately, schools and communities across the country have developed effective methods for identifying homeless children and youth and providing outreach and services to these children and their families.

Definitions of Homelessness

The federal definition of homeless, provided in the McKinney Act, is an important starting point for identification strategies.

> According to the Stewart B. McKinney Act, 42 U.S.C. § 11301, et seq. (1994), a person is considered homeless who "lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate night-time residence and; and... has a primary night-time residency that is: (A) a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations... (B) an institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized, or (C) a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings." 42 U.S.C. § 11302(a) The term 'homeless individual' does not include any individual imprisoned or otherwise detained pursuant to an Act of Congress or a state law." 42 U.S.C. § 11302(c)

The U.S. Department of Education has interpreted this definition to include children and youth who are living with friends temporarily because they lack permanent housing. Many homeless families are forced to live in these arrangements due to lack of shelter space. Other categories of children who are considered to be homeless according to the U.S. Department of Education's interpretation are listed at the end of this guide.

Strategies for Identifying Homeless Children and Youth

- Locate service agencies and develop relationships with them: Locate and meet with agencies, organizations, churches, and businesses that serve families, children, and youth who are low-income and who may be experiencing homelessness. In rural areas, where there are often no shelters, community action agencies may operate assistance programs for people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Many schools are unaware that service agencies exist in their communities, and therefore believe that they have no homeless children. Establishing contact with these agencies is important in order to know which students may be experiencing homelessness.

  Once service agencies have been located, set up meetings with them to begin to develop a relationship on such issues as the school enrollment process, transportation, and other student services. Are the children and youth attending school? If no, why not? How can the school and shelter work together to meet student needs? Work with area shelters to develop expedited enrollment procedures for children and youth without homes. Contact managers of economy motels and encourage them to insist that their customers enroll children in school. Provide enrollment and other related information to motel managers.

  It is also important to become actively involved with homeless service agencies in order to learn where to refer students and families for housing, health care, counseling, employment assistance, child care, food, and clothing.

- Become familiar with other areas of the community: the low-income neighborhoods; areas where young people who have dropped out of school might congregate during the day; locations of public laundry facilities, campgrounds, food banks, soup kitchens, and shelters; Head Start centers; migrant housing developments; public housing complexes; daily or weekly low-cost motels; and other areas. Speak with people who operate services or programs in these areas and with the people who use the services.

- Provide outreach materials and posters to shelters, motels, campgrounds, public laundry facilities, food banks, public housing complexes and other facilities where there is a frequent

influx of low-income families. Make sure that supplies of materials are always well-stocked, include information on educational rights, and that the materials contain a local phone number to call for enrollment and other assistance.

- Compile addresses of shelters, motels, and campgrounds frequently used by homeless families, and provide these addresses to district registrars and school secretaries. Registrars and secretaries can identify homeless students who provide these addresses upon enrollment, and help students with expedited enrollment and referrals to services they may need. School secretaries are often a good source of information for students who are "doubled-up" (living temporarily with another family) or who have made numerous school transfers.

- Develop relationships with truancy officials and/or other attendance officers. Truant officers should learn how to recognize school absences that may be the result of homelessness. Provide officers with information so that they may refer students to appropriate services. Careful monitoring of school attendance is another way to look for indicators of homelessness; frequent and unexpected absences may be the result of homelessness.

- Provide awareness activities at district-wide professional development training sessions. Invite staff from shelters, food banks, homeless coalitions, and other service agencies and organizations to conduct sensitivity training for school staff. Such activities should include training on how to spot possible indicators of homelessness, such as persistent fatigue, frequent absences, clothing that is dirty or worn repeatedly, inability to complete homework assignments, hoarding food, or sudden changes in behavior.

- Avoid using the word "homeless" in initial contacts with school personnel or families: For most people, the word "homeless" conjures images of older men on city streets, not children in classrooms. Teachers, school secretaries, and other school personnel may be unlikely to recognize "homeless" children initially, but often respond affirmatively when asked if they know of students who are staying temporarily with relatives; are staying at campgrounds or in their car; are living at motels; are living with another family temporarily; have moved several times in a year. For the same reasons, families and students who are homeless may not think of themselves as "homeless" because they do not identify with the term due to the stigma, or fear of losing their children to child welfare agencies. Therefore, outreach posters and materials placed in shelters, campgrounds, motels, and public housing projects should refer to describe the symptoms of homelessness, i.e. different kinds of housing instability, rather than "homelessness."

Who is Homeless?
Federal Education Guidelines on the Definition of Homelessness

Generally, according to non-regulatory guidance issued in 1995 by the US Department of Education:

- ***children in foster care should not be considered homeless.*** However, if children are temporarily placed in foster care because of a lack of shelter space, they can be considered homeless. Once placed in a foster home or a home for neglected children or youth, they should no longer be considered homeless.

- ***children who have been placed by the state in transitional or emergency shelters should be considered homeless if the placement is of a transitional or emergency nature.*** Typically, these are children who are awaiting foster care or other more permanent placement. If the placement is intended to be permanent (i.e., until children reach age 18), the children should not be considered homeless.

- ***children who are runaways should be considered to be homeless.*** Runaways who live in shelters, abandoned buildings, the streets, or other inadequate accommodations are considered homeless, ***even if their parents have provided and are willing to provide a home for them.*** Children who run away and live with friends or relatives should be considered homeless until the relationship with the friends or relatives becomes fixed, regular, and adequate.

- ***children who are "throwaway children" should be considered to be homeless.*** "Throwaway children" is the phrase given to describe children whose parents or guardians will not permit them to live at home. These children are also considered homeless until a fixed, regular, and adequate residence is established. "Throwaway children" live in situations very similar, but not identical, to runaways. School-age pregnant girls who have been thrown out of their homes and find refuge in homes for unwed mothers or in other places should be considered homeless until a fixed, regular, and adequate residence has been established.

- ***all abandoned children are homeless until a fixed, regular, and adequate residence is obtained.*** In some situations, school-age children are abandoned in hospitals (sometimes, because they have AIDS or other terminal diseases). In these cases, the hospital may act as shelter for these children until other arrangements can be made; meanwhile these children should be considered homeless.

- ***some children who live with friends or relatives should be considered homeless, depending upon their reasons for living with the friends and relatives and the permanence of the living arrangement.*** A child who lives with friends or relatives should be considered homeless if they are doubled-up because of a loss of housing or other similar situation.

- ***children who are living in families that are doubled- or tripled-up with other families can be considered homeless, depending on the specific circumstances of the family.*** When one family has lost its housing and moved in with another family, the children of the family that lost its housing should be considered homeless. The children of the family that share their home should not be considered homeless. Families living in doubled-up accommodations voluntarily to save money generally should not be considered homeless.

- ***the children of migrant workers may be homeless if they meet the McKinney definition; however, many children who qualify for migrant services reside in a fixed, regular, and adequate residence and should not be considered homeless.***

Appendix D

Reauthorization of the McKinney Act
Comparison of Bills: Summary of Major Provisions

Reauthorization of the McKinney Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program
Comparison of Bills: Summary of Major Provisions
November 1999

ISSUE	H.R. 1960 - "The Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999" Sponsor: William Clay (D-MO) (U.S. Dept. of Education Proposal)	H.R. 2888 - "The Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 1999" Sponsor: Judy Biggert (R-IL)	H.R. 2 - "The Students Results Act of 1999" Sponsor: William Goodling (R-PA) (Passed by House on Oct. 21, 1999)
Immediate Enrollment	Does not specify immediate enrollment.	Homeless children and youth are to be immediately enrolled in school, even if they cannot produce documentation usually required for enrollment. The enrolling school must immediately contact the last school attended to obtain relevant records. If a child lacks immunizations, the enrolling school must refer parent/guardian to the appropriate authorities.	Homeless children and youth are to be immediately enrolled in school. The enrolling school must immediately contact the last school attended to obtain relevant academic records. If a child lacks immunizations or immunization records, the enrolling school must refer parent/guardian to liaison, who shall help obtain necessary immunizations or records.
Reducing Mobility/ Stabilizing Education	Requires schools to keep children in their school of origin to the extent feasible, except when doing so is contrary to the wishes of the parent. Written explanation must be provided if parental/guardian wishes are not followed.	Requires schools to keep children in their school of origin to the extent feasible, except when doing so is contrary to the wishes of the parent.	The same as H.R. 2888.

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Issue	H.R. 1960	H.R. 2888	H.R. 2
Dispute Resolution	Maintains current law (i.e. the state must describe procedures for the prompt resolution of disputes in its state plan).	If there is a dispute over school selection or enrollment, the child/youth must be immediately enrolled in the school in which they are seeking enrollment until the dispute is resolved; the parent/guardian must be provided with written explanation of the school's decision, including the right to appeal; and the parent/guardian must be referred to the liaison, who will carry out the state's dispute resolution process within 7 days.	If there is a dispute over school selection or enrollment, the child/youth must be immediately enrolled in the school in which they are seeking enrollment until the dispute is resolved; the parent/guardian must be provided with written explanation of the school's decision, including the right to appeal; and the parent/guardian must be referred to the liaison, who will carry out the state's dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible.
Liaisons	Requires that a contact person be designated as a liaison for homeless children and youth in every school district in which homeless children and youth reside.	Requires that a contact person be designated as a liaison for homeless children and youth in every school district.	Same as H.R. 2888
Posting Public Notice of Rights	Requires that school districts in which homeless children and youth reside post public notice of the educational rights of homeless children and youth where children receive services (such as shelters and soup kitchens).	Requires that liaisons post public notice of the educational rights of homeless children and youth where children receive services (such as shelters and soup kitchens).	Same as H.R. 2888

Reauthorization of the McKinney Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program
Comparison of Bills: Summary of Major Provisions
November 1999

Issue	H.R. 1960	H.R. 2888	H.R. 2
Prohibition on Segregating Homeless Students	Prohibits states that receive McKinney funds from segregating homeless students in separate schools, except for short periods of time for health and safety reasons or to provide temporary, special, supplementary services.	Prohibits states that receive McKinney funds from segregating homeless students in separate schools, except for short periods of time for health and safety reasons or to provide temporary, special, supplementary services.	Prohibits states that receive McKinney funds from segregating homeless students in separate schools, except for short periods of time for health and safety reasons or to provide temporary, special, supplementary services. Separate schools established prior to enactment of the law are excluded from this prohibition and may continue to receive McKinney funds.
Parental Rights	Requires states to work with homeless parent groups to meet the needs of homeless students; requires liaisons to ensure that parents/guardians are informed of the education and related opportunities available to their children and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children.	Same as H.R. 1960	Same as H.R. 1960

Issue	H.R. 1960	H.R. 2888	H.R. 2
School of Origin	Maintains current law.	Clarifies that a homeless child or youth's right to attend their school of origin extends for the entire duration of homelessness.	Same as H.R. 2888
Subgrant Awards	Requires states to award competitive subgrants to school districts based on need and quality of the proposal.	Same as H.R. 1960	Same as H.R. 1960
Subgrant Application	Requires local applications for subgrants to contain an assessment of the educational and related needs of homeless children and youth in their district.	Same as H.R. 1960	Same as H.R. 1960
Improving Coordination	Requires that mandated coordination be designed to: (1) ensure that homeless children and youth have access to available education and related support services; (2) raise the awareness of school personnel and service providers of the effects of short-term stays in a shelter and other challenges associated with homeless children and youth.	Same as H.R. 1960	Same as H.R. 1960

Reauthorization of the McKinney Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program
Comparison of Bills: Summary of Major Provisions
November 1999

Issue	H.R. 1960	H.R. 2888	H.R. 2
Data Collection	Eliminates current data collection requirements for state coordinators. Requires ED, with other agencies, to gather information on the number and location of homeless children and youth.	Same as H.R. 1960	Same as H.R. 1960
Funding	Authorizes such sums as may be necessary for FY2001 through FY2005.	Authorizes $50 million for FY2001, and such sums above that amount, in subsequent years through FY2005.	Authorizes $36 million for FY2001, and such sums above that amount, in subsequent years through FY2005.
U.S.D.E. Guidance on Transportation	Does not require guidance or a report from the U.S. Department on these issues.	Requires the U.S. Department of Education to issue comprehensive guidance on transportation and enrollment not less than 60 days after the enactment of the law.	Requires the U.S. Department of Education to issue a comprehensive report on transportation and enrollment not less than 60 days after the enactment of the law.

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Issue	H.R. 1960	H.R. 2888	H.R. 2
Title I Eligibility in Targeted Assistance Schools	Clarifies that homeless children are eligible for services under this section.	Does not amend Title I.	Clarifies that homeless children are eligible for services under this section.
Title I Reservation of Funds	Requires an LEA to reserve sufficient funds to serve homeless children who do not attend participating schools (strikes "where appropriate" and "eligible" from current law).	Does not amend Title I.	Requires an LEA to reserve sufficient funds to serve homeless children who do not attend participating schools (strikes "where appropriate" and "eligible" from current law).

Appendix E

State Coordinators for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth

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Updated December 1999

Check web site for current information: http://www.serve.org/nche/statecoo.htm

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Wisconsin

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Wyoming

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Northern Mariana Islands

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Virgin Islands

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Other Homeless Education Resources

National Coalition for the Homeless

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National Center for Homeless Education

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National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty

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United States Department of Education

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